

University of Groningen

Eve's Pain in Childbearing? Interpretations of Gen 3

Ruiten, Jacques van

Published in:

Eve's Children: The Biblical Stories Retold and Interpreted in Jewish and Christian Traditions

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:

2003

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Ruiten, J. V. (2003). Eve's Pain in Childbearing? Interpretations of Gen 3: 16a in Biblical and Early Jewish Texts. In Luttikhuisen/Gerard P. (Ed.), Eve's Children: The Biblical Stories Retold and Interpreted in Jewish and Christian Traditions (pp. 3-26). Martinus Nijhoff/Brill.

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

EVE'S PAIN IN CHILDBEARING? INTERPRETATIONS OF GEN 3:16A IN BIBLICAL AND EARLY JEWISH TEXTS

JACQUES VAN RUITEN

In this first chapter we concentrate on the begetting of Eve's children. First, we consider the biblical text of Gen 3:16a, which speaks about Eve and childbearing. What does this verse mean, and how is it related to Gen 4:1–5:32, where the births of Cain, Abel and Seth are reported? We then continue with some aspects of the reception history of Gen 3:16a in the Hebrew Bible (Isa 65:23; 1 Chron 4:9–10) and in early Jewish literature (Septuagint of Gen 3:24, *Jubilees* 3:24; Josephus, *Antiquitates* 1:49; *Life of Adam and Eve* 25:1–3; 2 *Baruch* 56:5–6; 73:7; 4 *Ezra* 7:12; 10:12).

1. *Genesis 3:16a*

Eve's childbearing activity is mentioned several times in Genesis 4. However, already in chapter 3 some important comments are made about the begetting of children and the motherhood of Eve. While the first couple is still in Paradise, it is said (Gen 3:20): ויקרא האדם (Gen 3:20): שם אשתו חווה כי היא היתה אם כל חו ("the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the *mother* of all living"). Eve's name is associated with a predicted motherhood in relation to all living creatures. All creatures are thus Eve's children! Her maternal role is being prepared in Gen 3:16a, which speaks about the begetting of children in a somewhat negative context of punishment that follows the transgression. We quote Gen 3:16 along with the translation found in the Revised Standard Version:

MT Gen 3:16	Gen 3:16 (RSV)	
אל האשה אמר	16α	To the woman he said,
הרבה ארבה עצבונך והרנך	16αβ	"I will greatly multiply <i>your pain in childbearing</i> ;
בעצב תלדי בנים	αγ	<i>in pain you shall bring forth children</i> ,
(ואל אישך חשוקתך	(bα	yet your desire shall be for your husband,
והוא ימשל) בך	bβ	and he shall rule over you".)

The text anticipates the future life of the first woman just created.¹ It refers to the begetting of children. It should be observed, however, that the translations of this text are all somewhat misleading—not only the RSV quoted here but also other translations.² We will focus on the first part of the sentence pronounced on Eve and omit the second.

The sentence begins (Gen 3:16αβ) with an infinitive absolute of the verb רבה, followed by a finite form of the same verb (1 sg. imperf. *hiph'il*). This construction can be translated as “I will greatly multiply”.³ The object of this multiplying is the עצבון and the הרון of the woman. The meaning of both words and their relation to each other are the subject of debate.⁴ Most exegetes consider עצבון and הרון a hendiadys, a single expression for which two words are used.⁵ It means something like “(. . .) your pain in your childbearing”, or “(. . .) your pain of your childbearing”.

Some remarks can be made about this interpretation of Gen 3:16a. First, the word הרון is a *hapax legomenon*. It occurs only here and, according to some, it can be connected with the term הריון, which means “conception” in the two places where this term is used in the Hebrew Bible (Hosea 9:11; Ruth 4:13).⁶ Both הרון and הריון can be related to the verb הרה, which means “to conceive” as well as “to be pregnant”. Therefore, הרון in Gen 3:16a seems to concern more the *beginning* of pregnancy than its end.⁷ If this is true, something painful in *childbearing* seems to miss the point of הרון. The noun עצבון occurs in three places in the Hebrew Bible; outside Gen 3:16a, only

¹ Unlike the serpent (Gen 3:14–15) and the soil (Gen 3:17), the woman is not cursed. However, in Gen 3:15 a sentence is passed on her. Cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC 1; Waco, Texas 1987), 81; cf. C. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11* (BKAT 1/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1999⁴), 356. Differently W.H. Schmidt, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift. Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte von Genesis 1 1–2 4a und 2 4b–3 24* (WMANT, 17; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1967²), 214–218. See also: S.G.W. Andrews, *Ancient Interpretation of Divine Judgement in Eden* (Genesis 3:14–19), (Ph.D. Dissertation; Cambridge 1994), 30.

² For a short discussion of some of the translations, see C. Meyers, *Discovering Eve. Ancient Israelite Women in Context*, Oxford 1988, 95–97.

³ See *GesK*, 113c; cf. Gen 16:10; 22:17.

⁴ Cf. Andrews, *Interpretation*, 30.

⁵ E.g. J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (ICC; Edinburgh 1910); O. Procksch, *Die Genesis übersetzt und erklärt* (Leipzig 1924²); Westermann, *Genesis*, 356.

⁶ Cf. Andrews, *Interpretation*, 30.

⁷ Meyers, *Discovering*, 102–103.

in Gen 3:17 and 5:29. The verb *עצב*, however, and the derived nominatives, like *עצב*, occur more often.⁸ This word means something like “pain”, but is often used in a context where it means “toil”, i.e. hard unpleasant work, physically exhausting.⁹ Outside Gen 3:16a, the term *עצב* is never related to pregnancy or childbearing, except in 1 Chron 4:9–10, but this text seems to be an echo of Gen 3:16. In the context of Genesis, outside Gen 3:16, *עצבון* is related to hard and unpleasant work (Gen 3:17; 5:29). Moreover, when the notion of pain is mentioned with regard to pregnancy or childbirth the word *עצב* is never used, but always other words, e.g. *חיל* (cf. Jes 21:3; Jer 6:24; Ps 48:6). This could indicate that in the case of Gen 3:16a the sentence to the woman concerns two matters—on the one hand, hard work and on the other, pregnancies. The following translation seems to be more appropriate: “I will greatly increase your toil and your pregnancies”.¹⁰

The sentence continues with *בעצב חלדי בנים* (Gen 3:16aγ (RSV): “In pain, you shall bear children”) and parallels the first half of the sentence. Most probably *עצבון* parallels *בעצב*, whereas *וחרנך* parallels *חלדי בנים*. One might argue that Gen 3:16a speaks in the first line (v. 16aβ) about hard and unpleasant work, possibly with painful aspects, and about pregnancy. The second line (v. 16aγ) also speaks about this hard and unpleasant work, and possibly about childbirth. The verb *ילד* seems to concern the process of childbirth itself and not so much the preceding stages such as conception and pregnancy. Meyers goes a step further. According to her, one should distinguish between an intransitive use of the verb *ילד* (“you shall bring forth”), and a transitive use (“you shall bring forth *children*”). Only the intransitive use refers to childbirth, whereas the transitive use refers not so much to childbirth but to the status of parenthood. “The personal, physical process is not specified, but the social condition of contributing to family growth is prescribed”.¹¹ One could refer to the genealogies of Gen 5, Gen 10; and 1 Chron 1, where the male form of the verb *ילד* is used, which might not literally refer to childbirth.

⁸ The verb *עצב* occurs 15 times, the nomen *עצב* 9 times, the nomen *עצבה* 5 times, and *מעצבה* 1 time.

⁹ According to Meyers, *Discovering*, 103–105, the verb *עצב* mostly refers to psychological or emotional discomfort rather than to physical pain.

¹⁰ Meyers, *Discovering*, 105.

¹¹ So Meyers, *Discovering*, 106.

In all these places the verb יָלַד is used transitively. In Gen 3:16 יָלַד is used in the same way, and therefore the stress is more on the social notion of parenthood than on physical childbirth. Hence Meyer's translation here, "Along with travail shall you beget children", and this means "the work is unremitting and is not mitigated by the procreative demands placed on female existence". Parenthood, especially motherhood, is linked with hard unpleasant and tiring work.¹² Clearly Gen 3:16a does not speak about the moment of intercourse. Moreover, the realisation of the prospect of begetting children, of becoming a mother, is not found in chapter 3 of Genesis. Only outside the Garden of Eden will Eve bring forth children.

2. Genesis 4:1–5:32

In the beginning of Genesis 4, when Adam and Eve have just left Paradise, the first thing mentioned about them is that they had intercourse and that Eve became pregnant and bore a child: וַהֲרִים יָדָעָה אִישׁ (Gen 4:1a: "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain"). The text continues with Eve giving an etymology of the name Cain with a short phrase: וַהֲמִירָה אִישׁ אֵלֹהִים (Gen 4:1b: "saying, I have gotten a man with the help of YHWH"). This somewhat curious sentence has given rise to much speculation and interpretation in the versions, and also in early Jewish and rabbinic literature. Nearly every word in this biblical naming speech is a problem. The verb קָנָה has more than one meaning ("to acquire"; "to create"). The use of the word אִישׁ ("man") for a new-born baby is odd. And the final part אִישׁ יְהוָה is perplexing, since it seems to imply that God is the partner of Eve.¹³

After Cain's birth, the biblical text continues with the birth report of Abel וַתֵּלֶד אֵת אָבִיזָה אֶת אָבִיזָה (Gen 4:2a: "And again, she bore his brother Abel"). The Hebrew of this phrase is structured rather

¹² Meyers, *Discovering*, 108. Although Meyers' interpretation of the first part of v. 16 is quite attractive, I am not completely convinced by her interpretation of יָלַד and the differences she makes between the transitive and the intransitive use of it. Although it might sometimes be possible that יָלַד points to fatherhood or motherhood, and not to the physical process of childbirth, nevertheless in all places it refers to the very *beginning* of childbirth, the moment of being born.

¹³ See further the contributions of L. Teugels and F. García Martínez in the present volume.

peculiarly and has given rise to various interpretations. These mostly concern the phrase וַחֲסֵף לִלְדָּה. But what is striking is the lack of renewed intercourse and pregnancy. The problem is stressed at the end of chapter four, where we find for the first time the expression יָדַע עוֹד (“He *again* knew”). This seems to suggest that, after the first act of intercourse, this is the second (Gen 4:25: “And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for (she said), “God has appointed for me another child instead of Abel, for Cain slew him”). Although there is some deviation in the structure of Gen 4:25 with regard to Gen 4:1, the name-giving and the etymology of the name Seth seem to come again from the mother, Eve. Seth seems to emerge from Eve’s second pregnancy. In this case, one could consider Cain and Abel as twin brothers.¹⁴

However, there is yet another problem in the chapter. In v. 17 we read: “Cain knew *his wife*, and she conceived and bore Enoch”. Unless we presuppose that Cain had intercourse with his mother, the implication of this utterance in v. 17 is that, beside Cain and Abel, there were still more children, including at least one daughter. This has given rise to some speculation in early Jewish literature about how many daughters Eve bore. Who could Cain possibly have married? We omit the question of various sources which might have been drawn together here, but merely point to a problem in the final text which has given rise to various early interpretations.¹⁵

Jubilees, for example, is the earliest text to speak about a sister of Cain and Abel called *Awan* (cf. *Jub* 4:1). She it is who marries Cain. Later on, after the birth of Seth, Azura is mentioned, who marries Seth (*Jub* 4:8, 11). In later literature, even more sisters, including twins, are created. Josephus writes: “Adam and Eve had two sons . . . they also had daughters” (*Ant.* I.2.1). Pseudo-Philo says: “In the beginning of the world Adam became the father of three sons and one daughter: Cain, Noaba, Abel, and Seth” (*LAB* 1:1).¹⁶ *Gen. r.* 22:3: “R. Joshua b. Qorhah: Only two entered the bed, and seven left it: Cain and his twin sister, Abel and his two twin sisters”. This

¹⁴ Most modern commentators put this option aside, e.g., Skinner, *Genesis*, p. 103; Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 398; Wenham, *Genesis*, p. 102.

¹⁵ Cf. Bowker, *Targums*, 137.

¹⁶ See also the discussion of targumic and rabbinic texts by F. García Martínez and L. Teugels respectively below, pp. 27–45 and 47–56.

interpretation is related to the three occasions on which the particle **וְ** occurs in Gen 4:1c, 2a: “and she gave birth **וְ** Cain, . . . and she continued to give birth **וְ** his brother, **וְ** Abel”. The article placed once before Cain implies one twin sister, twice before Abel implies two twin sisters. The beginning of Gen 4:2a (“she continued to bear”) also plays a role in this interpretation, since *Gen r* 22:3 continues: “She continues to bear implies an additional birth, but not an additional pregnancy”.¹⁷ Elsewhere in rabbinic literature, it is said that “Four left the bed”.¹⁸ In *PRE* 21 it is stated: “Rabbi Miasha said: Cain was born, and his wife, his twin sister, with him”. Tg Ps-J Gen 4:1–2: “Adam knew his wife Eve who had conceived from Sammael, the angel of the Lord. Then, from Adam her husband she bore his twin sister and Abel”.

Also Genesis chapter 5 speaks about the begetting of the children. In Gen 5:1–5 the family story of Adam and Eve is seen from a somewhat different perspective. The text speaks about the generations of *Adam*: **וְזֶה סֵפֶר חֻלְדָּת אָדָם** (Gen 5:1: “This is the book of the generations of Adam”). The focus is no longer on Eve, who becomes pregnant and gives birth, but on Adam, who becomes “the father of”. In Hebrew, a different form of the same verb is used (**וַיֹּלֵד** instead of **וַיַּלְד**). Moreover, the birth reports of Cain and Abel are omitted: Adam immediately becomes the father of Seth. Subsequently, Adam becomes the father of still more sons and daughters, who are not mentioned by name (**בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת**), though it is clear that they are all born after Seth.

To conclude, one can say that the prospect of motherhood is being realised only outside the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:16, 20). In chapters 4 and 5, it is indeed narrated that Eve brought forth children. Some of the terminology of Gen 3:16a is repeated in Genesis 4–5 (**הָרָה**: Gen 4:1, 17; **וַיַּלְד בֶּן**: Gen 4:25; cf. **וַיַּלְד אִתָּהּ**: Gen 4:1, 2, 17). It is striking that the word **בַּעֲצָב** or **עֲצָבוֹךְ** is never used in connection with the actual begetting of Eve’s children. Nevertheless, the adventures of Cain and Abel, described in Gen 4:3–16, show that their growing up was not unproblematic. Abel was murdered by Cain, whereas Cain was cursed from the ground. When one reads the narrative of Gen 4:1–16 as a continuation of Gen 3, one might understand Gen 4:3–16 as an interpretation of **בַּעֲצָב** of Gen 3:16a.

¹⁷ Cf. *JT Yebam.* 11,11d; *BT Sanh* 38b; *ARN* 1.

¹⁸ Cf. *BT Sanh* 58b.

3. *The Interpretation of Genesis 3:16a in the Hebrew Bible*

3.1 *Isaiah 65:23*

In the Hebrew Bible, there are two possible allusions to Genesis 3:16, i.e. Isa 65:23 and 1 Chron 4:9–10. The first text, Isa 65:23, runs as follows:

לא ייגעו לדיק	23a	They shall not labour in vain,
ולא ילדו לבהלה	b	or bear children for calamity;
כי זרע ברוכי יהוה המה	c	for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of YHWH,
וצאצאיהם אהם	d	and their children with them.

This verse is part of the well-structured passage of Isa 65:17–25,¹⁹ which can be seen as typical for Trito-Isaiah, insofar as it is linked with Deutero-Isaiah and at the same time uses themes that occur only in Isaiah 56–66.²⁰ These verses interpret Deutero-Isaiah in a new historical context and refer in the first place to Isa 43:18–19.²¹ The chapter's closure (Isa 65:25) contains, in addition, an interpretation of Proto-Isaiah, especially Isa 11:6–9.²² Moreover, Isa 65:20–23 belongs to a genre of Covenant Theology, namely “the curse of ineffectivity”, which means that if Israel denies the covenant many forms of human labour will be in vain because someone else, namely the enemy, will appropriate the fruits of this labour.²³

¹⁹ For a discussion of the structure of this passage, see: W.A.M. Beuken, *Jesaja. Deel IIIB*, Nijkerk 1989, 57–62; J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, *Een begin zonder einde. De doorwerking van Jesaja 65:17 in de intertestamentaire literatuur en het Nieuwe Testament*, Sliedrecht 1990, 41–50; idem, “The Role of Syntax in the Versification of Is 65:13–25”, in: E. Talstra—A.L.H.M. van Wieringen (eds.), *Comparative Description and Literary Interpretation of Isaianic Texts* (Application, 9; Amsterdam 1992), 118–147; J.L. Koole, *Jesaja III* (COT; Kampen 1995), 412–414.

²⁰ Beuken, *Jesaja IIIB*, 81.

²¹ Beuken, *Jesaja IIIB*, 81–82; Van Ruiten, *Begin*, 51–60.

²² J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, “The Intertextual Relationship between Isaiah 65,25 and Isaiah 11,6–9”, in: F. García Martínez et al. (eds.), *The Scriptures and the Scrolls* (SVT, 49; Leiden 1992), 31–42; O.H. Steck, “‘... ein kleiner Knabe kann sie leiten’”. Beobachtungen zum Tierenfrieden in Jesaja 11, 6–8 und 65,25”, in: H.J. Hausmann – H.-J. Zobel (eds.), *Alttestamentlicher Glaube und Biblische Theologie* (Stuttgart 1992), 104–113.

²³ See especially Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 for this genre; O.H. Steck, 355, 357; cf. W. Gross, “Israels Hoffnung auf die Erneuerung des Staates”, in: J. Schreiner (ed.), *Unterwegs zur Kirche. Alttestamentliche Konzeptionen* (QD, 110; Freiburg 1987), 87–122 (esp. 106–112); Y. Goldman, *Prophétie et royauté au retour de l'exil* (OBO, 118), Fribourg 1992, 9–64; 218–237.

Although this typical Trito-Isaianic passage refers in the first place to Deutero- and to Proto-Isaiah, and although deuteronomistic language is also involved, it might also refer to the first chapters of Genesis.²⁴ The author shows an interest in removing the deficiencies of the first creation from the future situation of salvation, and in the case of chapter 65 he shows an interest in removing the curses of Genesis 3.

Several elements in Isa 65:17–25 allude to the first chapters of the book of Genesis.²⁵ We refer, in the first place, to v. 17 which speaks about the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. In the second place, v. 25 alludes, among other animals, to a serpent, and although this verse refers, in my opinion, in the first place to Isaiah 11:6–9, it is also true that a part of the curse of Genesis 3:14 is reflected here (“Upon your belly you shall go, *and dust you shall eat* all the days of your life”).²⁶ The curse has been changed into a blessing for the people of God. In the third place, Gen 3:17–20 speaks about toil, hard unpleasant work on the cursed ארצה, the cursed ground on which thorns and thistles grow; work that is physically very tiring and after which death follows. In contrast, Isa 65 speaks about a long life-span on a new earth, where the work of houses and vineyards is succesful (Isa 65:20–22). In the fourth place, v. 25e speaks about a holy mountain. This of course refers, in Isa 65, first of all to Jerusalem; but in early Jewish literature the holy mountain also has strong connotations of the Garden of Eden. In this future holy mountain (Jerusalem), in this new creation, the evil events (רעע) that occurred in the first creation, in the first Garden of Eden, will occur no longer. The new Jerusalem will therefore become the new Garden of Eden. Finally, the versions (esp. Tg and LXX) even strengthen the reference to the story of Paradise. We point here only to the addition in v. 22c (“the tree *of life*”), and v. 23b, in which LXX reads “They shall not bear children for the curse”, and the Targum “they bring up children for death”.

If it is true that the author of Isaiah 65 is rereading and rewriting the account of the first creation—and the account of the story of

²⁴ See O.H. Steck, “Der neue Himmel und die neue Erde. Beobachtungen zur Rezeption von Gen 1–3 in Jes 65,16b–25”, in: J. van Ruiten – M. Vervenne (eds.), *Studies in the Book of Isaiah*, (BETL, 132; Leuven 1997), 350–365.

²⁵ Cf. Steck, “Himmel”, 357–363.

²⁶ Cf. note 25.

Paradise and the aforementioned arguments point in this direction—then it is not impossible that Isa 65:23b refers to Gen 3:16a, although the verbal parallels between both texts are restricted to the verb יָלַד, which occurs also in many other places in the Hebrew Bible.

Gen 3:16

בַּעֲצָב חֲלָדִי בָנִים

Isa 65:23b

וְלֹא יִלְדוּ לְבָהֳלָה

Whereas the verb יָלַד is used in both texts, one could also point to לְבָהֳלָה (“for calamity”) in Isa 65:23b that might interpret בַּעֲצָב (“in pain”, but which could also be read as “[along] with travail”) of Gen 3:16. If this is true, then it is clear that, according to Trito-Isaiah, בַּעֲצָב does not say anything about the birth process itself, but about the fact that children are born destined for “calamity” and untimely death. The construction בַּעֲצָב is not interpreted as painful childbirth but as childbirth with a prospect of many troubles. In the eschaton, however, the woman is blessed with perfect children, without trouble in their lives. There is restoration of the order of Eden, with the reversal of several aspects of the curse.

3.2 1 Chronicles 4:9–10

Passage 1 Chron 4:9–10 is different from the rest of the chapter. It is not only a genealogy, but also presents an etymology.²⁷ Moreover, it is well marked off from the context by its envelope structure, in which the introduction (4:9a: “Jabez was more honorable than his brothers”) balances the conclusion (4:10b: “And God granted what he asked”). In between there is direct speech from the mother (4:9b: “And his mother called his name Jabez, saying: Because I bore him in pain”) and of Jabez (4:10a: “Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying: Oh that thou wouldst bless me and enlarge my border, and that thy hand might be with me, and thou wouldst keep me from harm so that I might not hurt me!”). Both speeches have many elements in common. We refer to the verbs קָרָא and אָמַר, the name יַעֲבֵץ, and the nomen עֲצָב. The fate evoked by the birth of Jabez is curbed by his prayer. Apparently, prayer is superior and more effective than the magic of the name.²⁸ Outside Gen 3:16 the word עֲצָב is

²⁷ S. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles. A Commentary* (London 1993), pp. 108–109; R. Braun, *1 Chronicles* (WBC 14; Waco, TX, 1986), 58.

²⁸ Japhet, *Chronicles*, 110.

only used in connection with the verb ילד in 1 Chron 4:9 (כי ילדתי) (בעצב). It is the only place in the Hebrew Bible where the pain of the birth is described with the word עצב. At the same time this word is used to describe a grievous and toilsome life. Although the text speaks about a painful childbirth, this description is used as a prediction of a very troubled life. Because of the prayer of Jabez, however, this prediction does not come about.

4. *The Interpretation of Genesis 3:16a in Early Jewish Literature*

We focus now on the question of how the first part of Gen 3:16 is interpreted in early Jewish literature. First, we briefly examine the version of the Septuagint of Genesis 3:16, then we look at the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament. References to Gen 3:16, can, of course, be found in examples of the rewritten Bible, i.e. in the *Book of Jubilees* (3:23–24) and in the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve* (25:1–3).²⁹ Beside this, one can find brief references to Gen 3:16 in 2 *Baruch* (56:5–6; 73:7) and in 4 *Ezra* (7:12; 10:12).

4.1 *The Septuagint of Genesis 3:16a*

LXX Gen 3:16a

16αα	καὶ τῇ γυναικὶ εἶπεν	16αα	And to the woman he said,
16αβ	Πληθύνων πληθυνῶ τὰς λύπας σου καὶ τὸν στεναγμὸν σου,	16αβ	“I will greatly multiply your sufferings and your <i>sighing</i> ;
16αγ	ἐν λύπαις τέξῃ τέκνα	16αγ	in the sufferings you shall bring forth children,

In the Hebrew text, the effect of the sentence to the woman is characterised by an increase of the עצבון והריון. The construction with the infinitive absolute (הרבה ארבה) is translated in the Greek of the Septuagint with a participle from the same verb.³⁰ The word עצבון is simply translated by the plural of λύπη, “sorrow, grief affliction”, and the LXX of Genesis does not differentiate between עצבון and עצב. Both are translated by αἱ λύπαι.³¹ This word has a more gen-

²⁹ I leave out here the reference to Gen 3:16a in Josephus, *Ant.* 1:49.

³⁰ For other examples, see H.St.J. Thackeray, *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint, I*, Cambridge 1909, 47–50.

³¹ Cf. also Gen 3:17; 5:29.

eral meaning and does not contain a specific reference to childbirth or pregnancy.³² The same applies to the second word στεναγμός, which means something like “sighing, groan”, but which is quite general in meaning and not related specifically to childbirth.³³ The first utterance in Gen 3:16 seems to be of a general character. The life of sadness outside Eden is in contrast with the paradisiacal life inside. The use of στεναγμός for הָרִיוֹן is quite odd. It is possible that the author had a word in his *Vorlage* that was different from the Massoretic text. It is, however, also possible that the LXX gives a free rendering of a Hebrew text that read הָרִיוֹן, because the translator did not associate הָרִיוֹן with הָרָה (“to conceive, be pregnant”). It is also possible that he considered the pregnancy in the curse as being in conflict with the divine blessing of procreation and therefore deliberately chose another word. According to some, the word στεναγμός describes the sighing of women during delivery.³⁴ Because the LXX has two parallel words at this point it is quite probable that the translator did not read a hendiadys here.

4.2 *Jubilees* 3:24

The rewriting of Gen 3:16 the *Jubilees* 3:24 is quite literal. The end of verse 23 shows God's displeasure with Eve (“At the woman, too, he was angry”) and gives an explicit reason for it (“because she had listened to the voice of the serpent”). Verse 24 is mainly a verbatim quotation of Gen 3:16, with some small modifications. First, the Hebrew עֲצֻבוֹתָ וְהָרִיוֹן in Gen 3:16b is rendered in *Jub* 3:24a as *chezenki wethe'arki* (“your sadness and your pain”). *Jubilees* has a similar reading to the Septuagint here. It has “pain” instead of “childbearing”. We should entertain the possibility that in *Jub* 3:24a the author has not chosen a word that differs from the Hebrew text of Genesis but that he has a different word in his *Vorlage*. The same applies to LXX Gen 3:16b. It is, therefore, possible that *Jubilees* also gives a free rendering of a Hebrew text in Genesis that reads הָרִיוֹן, because they

³² See LS, 1065–1066. Cf. M. Alexandre, *Le Commencement du Livre Genèse I–V. La version grecque de la Septante et sa réception* (Christianisme Antique, 3), Paris 1988, 317.

³³ See LS, 1638.

³⁴ Cf. J.W. Wevers, An Apologia for Septuagint Studies, *BIOSCS* 18 (1985) 16–38 (esp. 33–34); M. Rösel, *Übersetzung als Vollendung der Auslegung. Studien zur Genesis-Septuaginta* (BZAW, 223), Berlin 1994, 95.

did not associate הָרָה with הָרָה (“to conceive, be pregnant”). Although we are not sure whether we should read the two words in *Jubilees* as one expression, we could at least say that the *Jubilees* author does not combine here עֲצָב (*chʿzen*) with the notion of being pregnant. Moreover, the words עֲצָבוֹן (Gen 3:16b: “pain, hurt, sadness”) and עֲצָב (Gen 3:16c: “pain, toil, sadness”) are rendered in *Jubilees* by one and the same word (*chʿzen*). The same applies to LXX Gen 3:16bc. Finally, in *Jub* 3:24b an imperative (“bear”) is used instead of the imperfect (“you shall bear”). Against all other versions this is in line with EthGen 3:16.³⁵ One should consider here the possibility that it a later harmonisation.

Although the prediction about bearing children in *Jub* 3:24 is not omitted, it is not impossible that the author, with the rendering of הָרָה as *chʿzen* (“pain”), tries to avoid the association of conception or pregnancy with the Garden of Eden. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that the naming of Eve, and its explanation (Gen 3:20), are omitted from their proper place in the narrative of *Jubilees*. There, Adam does not give the name to Eve immediately after the curse. It is *delayed* until they have left Eden, namely in v. 33. In the explanation of the name, it is said that the name “Eve” has something to do with motherhood and childbearing. At the same time, the curse of Gen 3:16 loses much of its weight with this delay of the naming. Moreover, an *explanation* of the name is not given. This omission in the case of Eve might be deliberate, although the author also leaves out many other naming speeches. The connection between the name choice and the negative sides of Eden is broken. We would suggest that the author of *Jubilees* tries to avoid any suggestion that the childbearing activity of Adam and Eve has anything to do with the curse in the Garden of Eden.³⁶

The birth of Cain and Abel is described in *Jub* 4:1, the rewriting of Gen 4:1b–2c. The author adds a chronological framework and mentions the birth of a daughter. The births of Cain and Abel are not dated in the Book of Genesis. By being seen within a chronological framework, they take their appropriate place in sacred history. Moreover, the link with the other birth reports (*Jub* 4:7–33) is strengthened. *Jub* 4:1 also mentions the birth of a daughter to Adam

³⁵ Cf. J.C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (CSCO, 88; Leuven 1989), 19.

³⁶ B. Halpern-Amaru, “The First Woman, Wives, and Mothers in *Jubilees*”, *JBL* 113 (1994) 609–624 (esp. 613).

and Eve: “‘Awan, his (i.e. Adam’s) daughter”. The birth of daughters in order to provide appropriate wives for the sons is an important issue for the author of *Jubilees*. Problems with regard to childbirth are not mentioned. The author does not refer back to a predicted curse about a painful birth.

4.3 *The Greek Life of Adam and Eve 25:1–3*

Many legends are woven around Adam and Eve. Within these disparate traditions, the *Lives of Adam and Eve* form a clear entity. These *Lives* are retellings of the story of Genesis 3, which describes Adam and Eve’s transgression against God’s commandment and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. The *Lives* try to investigate the consequences of these events for humanity.³⁷ One can distinguish five versions: the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*,³⁸ also called the *Apocalypse of Moses*,³⁹ which can be considered the oldest; the Armenian version;⁴⁰ the Georgian version;⁴¹ the Latin version;⁴² and the Slavonic version.⁴³ Although these versions are clearly related, they differ in many

³⁷ M. de Jonge – J. Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature* (Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha), Sheffield 1997, 11.

³⁸ There does not exist a critical edition of *GLAE*. See, however, the diplomatic editions of the manuscripts by M. Nagel, *La vie d’Adam et d’Eve (Apocalypse de Moïse, I–III)*, Lille 1974. His preparation for a critical edition was used in A.-M. Denis, *Concordance grecque des pseudépigraphes d’Ancien Testament*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1987, 815–818; and Anderson – Stone (eds.), *Synopsis*. An eclectic edition of several manuscripts of the text one can find in D.A. Bertrand, *La vie grecque d’Adam et Eve* (Recherches intertestamentaires, 1; Paris 1987).

³⁹ This name was given by C. Tischendorf when he published the work in 1866, because of the preface (“The narrative and life of Adam and Eve the first-made, revealed by God to Moses his servant when he received the tablets of the law etc.”), which occurs in many manuscripts.

⁴⁰ The Armenian *Book of Adam* closely follows the Greek version. Distinct from this is the *Penitence of Adam*; cf. M.E. Stone, *The Penitence of Adam* (CSCO, 429–430; Leuven 1981).

⁴¹ The *Georgian Book of Adam* is closely related to the Armenian *Penitence of Adam*. It was published by C. K’urc’idze in 1964 and translated by J.-P. Mahé; cf. “Le livre d’Adam géorgien”, in: R. van den Broek – M.J. Vermaseren (eds.), *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions* (FS G. Quispel; Leiden 1981), 227–260.

⁴² There are two editions of the Latin *Life of Adam and Eve*: W. Meyer, “Vita Adae et Evae”, *Abhandlungen der philosophischen Klasse der königlichen Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, XIV.3 (München 1878), 185–250; J.H. Mozley, The “Vita Adae”, *JTS* (1929) pp.121–147. M.B. Halford, “The Apocryphal Vita Adae et Evae. Some Comments on the Manuscript Tradition”, *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 82 (1981) 417–427, mentions many manuscripts, which were not used by Meyer or Mozley.

⁴³ V. Jagic, “Slavische Beiträge zu den biblischen Apocryphen, I, Die altkirchenslavischen Texte des Adambuches”, *Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*.

respects.⁴⁴ We restrict ourself here to the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve* (*GLAE*), because the most obvious allusion to Gen 3:16a can be found here. We refer to *GLAE* 25.⁴⁵

Whereas Genesis 3 tells the story in a chronological order, the version of this story in *GLAE* is told in the form of two flashbacks, one by Adam (7–8) and one by Eve (15–30), both delivered at Adam's deathbed. Moreover, *GLAE* elaborates the events around the death and funeral of Adam (31–41) and those of Eve (42–43). One can define the literary form of *GLAE* as farewell discourse.⁴⁶ One should realise, however, that the story contains two farewell speeches and that the most important of these (15–30) is not uttered by the dying person himself but by his wife. The flashbacks on the transgressions of Adam and Eve explain why human beings have to die. The events around the death of Adam are directed at the life of men after death and at their resurrection.

The allusion to Gen 3:16a occurs in *GLAE* 25, in which the judgement of Eve is described. The reference is part of Eve's farewell speech, in which she looks back at life in the Garden of Eden (15–30). At the beginning (15:1), and at the end (30:1), she addresses her children. She describes the situation in Paradise (15:2–3), and how Satan seduced the serpent (16), the serpent Eve (17–19), and Eve her husband Adam (21). God returns to Paradise and summons Adam (22–23). Thereupon, Adam, Eve, and the serpent are condemned for their actions (24–26). When the angels eject Adam and Eve from Paradise, Adam makes three requests. First, he asks, in vain, to stay a little while in Paradise in order to beg God for mercy (27). Then he asks, again in vain, to be allowed to eat from the tree of life (28). Finally, a request to take fragrances from Paradise, so that after he has left he will be able to bring an offering to God, is granted.

Phil.Hist. Classe 42.1 (Vienna 1893) 1–104. New material is listed by E. Turdeanu, "La Vie d'Adam et d'Eve en slave et en roumain", in: E. Turdeanu, *Apocryphes slaves et roumains de l'Ancien Testament* (SVTP, 5; Leiden 1981), 75–144; 437–438.

⁴⁴ The Greek and Latin text, as well as translations of the Armenian, Georgian and Slavonic versions are published in a synoptic overview by Anderson and Stone. Cf. G.A. Anderson – M.E. Stone (eds.), *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve* (SBL, Early Judaism and Its Literature, 5; Atlanta 1995). For the relationship between the various versions and text forms, see De Jonge – Tromp, *Life*, 28–44.

⁴⁵ This chapter in *GLAE* has a close parallel in both the Armenian and Georgian version (44[25]). Besides, there is a somewhat hidden allusion, which is connected with the birth of Cain, in the Armenian, Georgian, and Latin *Life of Adam and Eve* (19).

⁴⁶ Cf. De Jonge – Tromp, *Life*, 45–47.

Adam receives four kinds of fragrant spices and herbs (crocus, nard, reed, cinnamon) plus “seeds for his food” (29).

Eve’s account of the Fall (*GLAE* 15–30) parallels Gen 3:1–24, which concerns the ejection from the Garden. In the following table, we give a general comparative overview of Gen 3:1–24 and *GLAE* 15–30:

<i>Ejection from the Garden</i> (Genesis 3:1–24)		<i>Farewell Speech of Eve</i> (<i>Greek Life of Adam and Eve</i> 15–30)	
		1. 15–16	Introduction
1. 3:1–7	<i>Temptation and transgression</i> a. serpent (3:1a) b. woman (3:1b–6) c. man (3:7)	2. 17–21	<i>Temptation and transgression</i> a. serpent (16) b. woman (17–20) c. man (21)
2. 3:8–13	<i>Hiding from God and Accusation</i>	3. 22–23	<i>Hiding from God and Accusation</i>
3. 3:14–29	<i>Judgement</i> a. 3:14–15 <u>serpent</u> b. 3:16 <u>woman</u> c. 3:17–19 <u>man</u>	4. 24–26	<i>Judgement</i> a. 24 <u>man</u> b. 25 <u>woman</u> c. 26 <u>serpent</u>
4. 3:20–24	<i>Expulsion</i>	5. 27–29	<i>Expulsion</i>
		6. 30	Conclusion

It may be clear that *GLAE* 15–30 follows the story of Genesis 3 at many points. However, there are also considerable deviations.⁴⁷ These are sometimes due to interpretations of the biblical story, i.e. the close relationship between the Satan and the serpent, the interpretation of the nakedness of Adam and Eve, and how it was possible that Eve was seduced. These interpretations occur also in other texts in early Jewish literature. Further deviations seem to have more to do with the need for embellishments, i.e. the description of Paradise, which is surrounded by a wall with doors, the description of God returning to Paradise to judge Adam sitting on a chariot of cherubim, whereas the archangel sounds the trumpet. For a proper understanding of *GLAE* and the way it uses the Genesis story, it is useful

⁴⁷ Cf. De Jonge – Tromp, *ibid.*

to describe the intertextual relationship of Genesis and *GLAE*. In this respect, it makes no difference if the additions and variations in *GLAE*, when compared with the biblical text, should be attributed to the authors of *GLAE* or to a preceding tradition which they adopted. We restrict myself, in the framework of this paper, to the relationship between Gen 3:16a and *GLAE* 25.

<i>Gen 3:16</i>		<i>Greek Life of Adam and Eve 25:1–3</i>	
16aα	To the woman he said,	1a	Turning to me, the Lord said to me,
		b	“Since you have listened to the serpent
		c	and ignored my commandment,
16aβ	“I will greatly multiply your pain and your childbearing;	d	you shall be in pains and intolerable sufferings;
αγ	in pain <i>you shall bring forth children,</i>	2a	<i>you shall bring forth children in many ways</i>
		b	and in one hour you shall come to bear and lose your life from your great anguish and sorrows.
		3a	And you shall confess, and say,
		b	“Lord, Lord, save me
		c	and I will never again turn to the sin of the flesh”
		4a	And by this, according to your word, I will judge you,
		b	because of the enmity which the enemy has placed in you.
(bα	yet your desire shall be for your husband,	(c	And yet you shall turn again to your husband,
bβ	and he shall rule over you”.)	d	and he shall rule over you”)

There can be no doubt that *GLAE* 25:1–3 refers to Gen 3:16. The general context points already in that direction: *GLAE* 15–30 is a retelling of Genesis 3. After the transgression follows the judgment. The order is chiastic, when compared to the biblical texts: first the judgement on the man, then on the woman, and finally on the serpent. Also, within *GLAE* 25:1–3 itself, the reference to Gen 3:16 is clear. In the introduction in *GLAE* 25:1, it is made clear that the woman Eve is the one who is speaking. After this, *GLAE* speaks about the birth of children in a comparable way to Gen 3:16. And

the concept of pain is central to it. Finally, the text speaks of returning the woman to her husband, which is nearly identical in both texts (LXX Gen 3:16b; *GLAE* 25:4cd). At the same time, it is clear that the verbal similarity between Gen 3:16a and *GLAE* 25:1–2 is very small. In fact only the words “you shall bring forth children” (*GLAE* 25: τέξει τέκνα; LXX: τέξη τέκνα) occur in both texts. The Hebrew phrase הרבה הרבה עצבונך וחרנך (LXX: Πληθύνων πληθυνῶ τὰς λύπας σου καὶ τὸν στεναγμόν σου) does not occur in the same way in *GLAE* 25. Instead, *GLAE* 25:1 speaks about ἔσει ἐν καμάτοις καὶ ἐν πόνοις ἀφορήτοις (“you shall be in pains and intolerable sufferings”). In view of what follows, these words seem to be related with the birth of children. Instead of כעצב (LXX: ἐν λύπαις), one can find an extensive description in *GLAE* 25:2: ἐν πολλοῖς τρόποις καὶ ἐν μιᾷ ὥρᾳ ἔλθεις τοῦ τεκεῖν καὶ ἀπολέσεις τὴν ζωὴν σου ἐκ τῆς ἀνάγκης σου τῆς μεγάλης καὶ τῶν ὀδυνῶν (“... in many ways, and in one hour you shall come to bear and lose your life from your great anguish and sorrows”). The utterance is not completely clear. It seems as if the birth of children takes place in many different ways. At the moment of childbirth, there is also the fear of losing a life. The connection of childbirth and the loss of a life does not occur in Genesis. The experience of childbirth seems to cause Eve’s repentance, since she says: “I will never again turn to the sin of flesh”.⁴⁸

4.4 2 *Baruch* 56:5–6; 73:7

One can find some brief references to Gen 3:16 in 2 *Baruch* and 4 *Ezra*. Both are apocalyptic texts and date from the late first or early second century c.e. The authors do not so much comment on scripture as use it as a reference point for their own discourse. They want to convince their readers of the immanence of eschatological salvation and for this they take from scripture whatever they can use.⁴⁹ Therefore, the answer to the questions as to how they read Gen 3:16, and if they saw a tension between Gen 3:16 and Gen 4, is not straightforward.

⁴⁸ It is not explained in the texts what is meant by “the sin of flesh”.

⁴⁹ Andrews, *Interpretation*, 163–164.

In *2 Baruch*, in two places, one can find small allusions to Gen 3:16. First, in *2 Baruch* 56:5–6 the author refers to Genesis 2–3. This is established by the fact that the text speaks about “the transgression of Adam” (56:5b) and gives a sort of catalogue of the consequences. The text reads as follows:

2 Baruch 56:5–7 (Tr. A.F.J. Klijn, *OTP* I, p. 641)

- 5a And as you first saw the black waters on the top of the cloud
which first came down upon the earth;
- b this is the transgression which Adam, the first man, committed.
- 6a For when he transgressed,
- b untimely death came into being,
- c mourning was mentioned,
- d affliction was prepared,
- e illness (*k'b'* = עֲצָב) was created,
- f labour accomplished,
- g pride began to come into existence,
- h the realm of death began to ask to be renewed with blood,
- i the conception of children came about,
- j the passion of the parents was produced,
- k the loftiness of men was humiliated,
- l and goodness vanished.
- 7a What could have been blacker and darker than these things?

The text does not quote Genesis 3 literally, but freely alludes to it. Nevertheless, one could establish some connections with Genesis 3. First, *illness* (56:6e) is a common word for “grief” and “pain”. However, it is possibly used to refer to the pain which is mentioned in connection with childbirth in Gen 3:16, since the Peshitta of Gen 3:16, 17 uses this word (*k'b'*) as a translation of עֲצָב, whereas in *2 Baruch* 73:7 it is used to describe “the pain” of childbirth which will be eliminated in the new aeon.⁵⁰ Second, *labor* (56:6f) could refer to Gen 3:23, but it might also refer to Gen 3:17. In that case, the sequence of childbirth and labour of Gen 3:16–17 occurs here. Third, the sequence of the conception of children followed by the passion of the parents (56:6i–j) seems also to refer to Gen 3:16. As a consequence of the transgression they are longing for each other and produce children. There are, however, some problems with the inter-

⁵⁰ See J.R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism. From Sirach to 2 Baruch* (JSPSS, 1; Sheffield 1988), 140.

pretation of the word 'nsb' (56:6i). According to some, it refers to "the conception" of children.⁵¹ For Levison, however, it denotes "taking away" and refers to death.⁵² Bogaert reads it as "the carrying of the children".⁵³ In that case, it could refer to an inescapable aspect of human existence,⁵⁴ but, more specifically, it might also refer to Abel's murder. In that case, the preceding phrase, "the realm of death began to ask to be renewed with blood" (56:6h), could also refer to Gen 4:11, which speaks about the ground that has opened its mouth to receive Abel's blood. If the reference to the murder of Abel is correct, then one could refer also to 56:6b which speaks about "untimely death". This could, of course, allude to Gen 3:22, where it is stated that man cannot live for ever. However, it could also refer to the murder of Abel, who thus died an untimely death.⁵⁵ In conclusion, one might say that in this passage of 2 *Baruch* Adam is described as blameworthy. Pain and illness, and possibly the conception of children, came into the world not because of Eve but because of his transgression. Eve is not mentioned, nor is she blamed.⁵⁶ The word עֲצַב seems to be interpreted as a more general term. It is not only related to childbirth and conception, but runs parallel to mourning, affliction, untimely death and labour. Moreover, the author of these verses take Genesis 3 and 4 together. The story of the brothers fills in what is predicted by the curses of Paradise.

The second place in 2 *Baruch* in which a possible reference can be found to Gen 3:16 is chapter 73:7. We give the translation of this text in the context of 2 *Baruch* 73:1–74:4:

⁵¹ R.H. Charles, *The Apocalypse of Baruch Translated from the Syriac*, London 1896, p. 513; W. Harnisch, *Verhängnis und Verheissung der Geschichte. Untersuchungen zum zeit- und Geschichtsverständnis im 4. Buch Esra und in der syr. Baruchapokalypse*, Göttingen 1969, 112; A.F.J. Klijn, "2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch", in: J.H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, I*, London 1983, 641.

⁵² Levison, *Portraits*, 140.

⁵³ P. Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch. Introduction, traduction du syriaque et commentaire, I–II* (SC 144–145; Paris 1969), II, 108.

⁵⁴ Bogaert, *Apocalypse, II*, 108 ("The Sheol carries away the children").

⁵⁵ Levison, *Portraits*, 139.

⁵⁶ There is one passage, however, in 2 *Baruch* where Eve is mentioned as the one to be blamed: "O Adam, what did you do to all who were born after you? And what will be said of the first Eve who obeyed the serpent, so that this whole multitude is going to corruption?" (48:42). Cf. Levison, *Portraits*, 135–136.

2 *Baruch* 73:1–74:4 (Tr. A.F.J. Klijn, *OTP*, I, pp. 645–646)

- 73:1a And it will happen that after he has brought down
everything which is in the world,
b and has sat down in eternal peace on the throne of the
kingdom,
c then joy will be revealed
d and rest will appear.
2a And then health will descend in dew,
b and illness will vanish,
c and fear and tribulation and lamentation will pass away
from among men,
d and joy will encompass the earth.
3a And nobody will again die untimely,
b nor will any adversity take place suddenly.
4a Judgment, condemnations, contentions, revenges, blood,
passions, zeal, hate, and all such things will go into
condemnation since they will be uprooted.
5a For these are the things that have filled the earth with evils,
b and because of them the life of men came in yet greater
confusion.
6a And the wild beasts will come from the wood
b and serve men,
c and the asps and dragons will come out of their holes to
subject themselves to a child.
7a And women will no longer have pain (*k'b'* = עצב) when
they bear,
b nor will they be tormented when they yield the fruits of
their womb.
74:1a And it will happen in those days that the reapers will
not become tired,
b and the farmers will not wear themselves out,
c because the products of themselves will shoot out speedily,
d during the time they work on them in full tranquillity.
2a For that time is the end of that which is corruptible and
the beginning of that which is incorruptible.
3a Therefore, it is far away from the evil things and near
to those which do not die.
4a Those are the last bright waters which have come after
the last dark waters.

In 73:6, the author of 2 *Baruch* refers to Isaiah 11:6–9, whereas he refers in the continuation of the text (74:1) to an important theme of Isaiah 65. It contains a reference to those “who toil without weariness” (cf. Isa 65:21–23).⁵⁷ Above, We have already pointed above to

⁵⁷ Andrews, *Interpretation*, 166.

the supposition that Isaiah 65 is also referring to Genesis 3, a notion stressed by the ancient versions of Isaiah. It is not impossible that the author of 2 *Baruch* is referring to Genesis 3, via Isaiah 65. We point especially to Isa 65:23: "They shall not labour in vain/or bear children for terror" (Isa 65:23). Also Isaiah 11:6–9 plays a part in Isaiah 65. While speaking about the nature of the redeemed order, the author of 2 *Baruch* combines Isaiah 11, 65 and Genesis 3.⁵⁸ The description of future glory is a merging of the reversal of the curses of Gen 3:16–19,⁵⁹ for which the author borrows from Isaiah 11 and 65. As far as we can see, the pain is related directly to childbirth (73:7a), although in addition to the pain of childbearing it also refers to a difficult life after the birth (73:2–5). So כַּעֲצָב is related directly to the pain of childbirth, but also to the sorrow afterwards. In the future era, the judgement in Eden will be reversed.

4.5 4 *Ezra* 7:12; 10:12

In 4 *Ezra*, there are two possible allusions to Gen 3:16 (4 *Ezra* 7:12; 10:12). The text of 7:12 is part of a larger unit (7:1–25) in which the angel Uriel answers questions from Ezra, posed in 6:59 ("If the world has indeed been created for us, why do we not possess our world as an inheritance? How long will this be so?").⁶⁰ 4 *Ezra* 7:10–14 shows the implications of what has been brought forward by the angel in two parables (7:3–9). The first describes a broad and vast sea. Its entrance, however, is narrow. The second shows a city. Its entrance also is narrow, and dangerous. In 7:10–14, the author explains the meaning of the parables. Originally, the world was broad and vast. This was the world created for Israel's sake. When Adam transgressed, this creation was judged.⁶¹ The consequence is that there is not only a wide, broad, and safe world but also a narrow, painful and toilsome one. It is only possible to enter the broad and safe world when one has negotiated the narrow and dangerous path.⁶² The spatial picture of two worlds (spacious and safe over against small and dangerous) becomes a temporal picture, in that this world

⁵⁸ Andrews, *Interpretation*, 166.

⁵⁹ Cf. Levison, *Portraits*, 143; Andrews, *Interpretation*, 166.

⁶⁰ For a study of the form and structure of 4 *Ezra* 7:1–25, see M.E. Stone, *Fourth Ezra. A Commentary of the Book of Fourth Ezra* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis 1990), 191–192.

⁶¹ Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 193.

⁶² Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 191.

is the narrow and dangerous one and the world to come its safe and spacious counterpart. One must first pass through the dangerous world before one can enter the spacious one. In sum, Adam's transgression necessitated the postponement of rewards until the age to come.

The list of difficulties which describes this world differs from Gen 3:14–19, which outlines the consequences of the transgression of Adam and his wife. However, the words “sorrowful” and “toilsome” recall the curses of Genesis.⁶³ In 7:12, the word *dolentes* (“sorrowful”), possibly refers to בעצב in Gen 3:16 (where the Vulgate reads *in dolore*).⁶⁴ In Genesis 3, it is part of the woman's curse, while the author of *IV Ezra* applies it to Adam. The second word *laboriosi* (“toilsome”) possibly refers to בעצברן in Gen 3:17, where the Vulgate reads *in laboribus*. The other words which Uriel uses are commonplace descriptions of the troubles of human life and seem not so much to reflect Genesis 3.

In chapter 10 a small reference to Gen 3:16a can also be found. We point first to v. 12 (“For I have lost the fruit of my womb, which I brought forth in pain, and bore in sorrow”), and v. 14b (“As you brought forth in sorrow”). But we refer also to v. 10 (“And from the beginning all have been born of her”) and to v. 7 (“Zion, the mother of us all”). It is, of course, true that Zion or Jerusalem as a mother is a figure that has clear biblical roots and appears elsewhere in both early Jewish literature and the New Testament.⁶⁵ However, the addition “(the mother) *of us all*” is something said especially of Eve (cf. Gen 3:20). In this passage, Ezra is addressing a mourning woman who has lost her son. He says to her, “Why do you mourn? For, firstly, we are all mourning because of Zion (v. 6–8) and, secondly, the earth should mourn over so many that come forth upon it” (v. 9–11). The woman answers that the earth is not touched in the way she is, since she lost the fruit of her womb. And then the reference to the curse of Gen 3:16a is made (“... I brought forth in pain, and bore in sorrow”). But Ezra continues with the idea that the earth also gives birth, that the earth can be con-

⁶³ Levison, *Portraits*, 121.

⁶⁴ Levison, *Portraits*, 121; Andrews, *Interpretation*, 169.

⁶⁵ See, for example, Isa 50:1; Jer 50:12; Hos 2:4; 4:5; 2 *Baruch* 3:1; 10:16; Gal 4:26. Cf. Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 321.

sidered a womb. Although it is difficult to draw any conclusions about the use of Gen 3:16, it seems as if, according to *4 Ezra*, the pain and the sorrow are related explicitly to childbirth. It is not so much Eve who suffers this pain but women in general, Zion and the earth more specifically.

5. Conclusion

We started out with two questions. What is the meaning of Gen 3:16a, and how is this part of the sentence to the woman interpreted elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible and in early Jewish literature?

We have tried to show that the sentence to the woman (Gen 3:16a) concerns two matters. On the one hand, it is about hard, unpleasant work, possibly with painful aspects and on the other it is about childbearing. The terms for pain and toil are used in relation to childbirth; but beside this they are also used to point to aspects of the life of the woman beyond the moment of childbirth. Only outside the Garden of Eden (Gen 4:1–5:32) is the prospect of begetting children realised. However, the terms used for pain and toil are not used in relation to the actual begetting of children. One could perhaps suggest that the adventures of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1–16) point to a painful and toilsome life after their birth.

The interpretations of Gen 3:16a in the Hebrew Bible and in early Jewish Literature are diverse. According to Trito-Isaiah, the toil and pain are not to be interpreted as a painful childbirth but as a childbirth with a prospect of many troubles (Isa 65:23). In the eschaton, however, there is a restoration of the order of Eden, with the reversal of several aspects of the curse. The woman is blessed with perfect trouble-free children. The text of 1 Chron 4:9–10 speaks about a painful childbirth, but this is used as a prediction of a life with many troubles. Because of prayer, the prediction does not come to fruition. In LXX Gen 3:16a and in *Jub* 3:24 the toilsome and painful aspects seem not to be related specifically to childbirth. It seems as if the life of sadness is made to contrast with the paradisiacal life inside Eden. Childbirth is related to life outside Eden. Because of his conception of Eden as a temple, the author of *Jubilees* seems to show that sexual intercourse and childbearing do not take place inside the garden but only when Adam and Eve have left it. The painful aspects seem not to refer to childbirth as such but to

the general conditions of life, in which childbirth also takes place. In *GLAE* 25:1–3 it is perfectly clear that pain is related directly and explicitly to childbirth. According to *2 Baruch* 56:5–7 pain and illness seem not to be related to childbirth and conception but are parallel to mourning, affliction and untimely death. According to this text, the narrative of Gen 4:1–16 fills in what is predicted by the sentence to the woman. In *2 Baruch* 73:7 the pain is related directly to childbirth, although it not only refers to the pain of childbearing but also to a difficult life after birth. In the future dispensation, this judgement of Eden will be reversed. In *4 Ezra* 10:12, finally, it seems as if the pain and sorrow are related explicitly to childbirth.

EVE'S CHILDREN

*The Biblical Stories Retold and
Interpreted in Jewish and
Christian Traditions*

EDITED BY

GERARD P. LUTTIKHUIZEN



BRILL
LEIDEN · BOSTON
2003

THEMES IN
BIBLICAL NARRATIVE
JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS

Editorial Board

ROBERT A. KUGLER – GERARD P. LUTTIKHUIZEN
LOREN T. STUCKENBRUCK

Assistant Editor

FREEK VAN DER STEEN

Advisory Board

WOLFGANG A. BIENERT – JAMES L. KUGEL
FLORENTINO GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ – JAMES R. MUELLER – ED NOORT

VOLUME V

